

KINGSBRIDGE  
RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

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*Report*

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

For the Year 1946



KINGSBRIDGE :

LUGGER BROS., PRINTERS, 83, FORE STREET

# *Kingsbridge Rural District Council*

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CLERK TO THE COUNCIL,

Council Offices, Manor House, Kingsbridge, S. Devon.

Telephone : Kingsbridge 2246-47.

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MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH,

Council Offices, Manor House, Kingsbridge, S. Devon.

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CLERK TO M.O.H.

MISS MUSGRAVE, 1/1/46-30/9/46.

MISS ECCLES, 1/10/46.

Telephone : Kingsbridge 2004.

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SANITARY INSPECTORS,

Council Offices, Manor House, Kingsbridge, S. Devon.

Telephone : Kingsbridge 2246-47.

KINGSBRIDGE RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

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*Annual Report*  
OF THE  
*Medical Officer of Health*  
For the Year 1946

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*Medical Officer of Health* : DR. W. C. SMALES, M.C.R.S., L.R.C.P.,  
D.P.H.

*Deputy Medical Officer of Health* : DR. W. H. COWPER, M.B.,  
B.C.H., B.A.O.

*Surveyor and Senior Sanitary Inspector* : MR. N. HARRIS, A.I.A.S.,  
C.R.S.I.

*Second Sanitary Inspector* : MR. M. S. POWLING, C.R.S.I. (Inspector  
of Meats and Foods).

*Temporary Sanitary Inspector (Housing Survey)* : MR. A. E. SMITH.

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present my Report on the health of the district for the year 1946.

The health of the district has continued to be very satisfactory and there has been little infectious disease during the year.

The National Health Service Act, 1946, became law and provides a complete medical service free of charge for every citizen and details of its administration are at present under consideration.

**STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.**

Area—70,818 acres.

Population—10,920.

Number of Inhabited Houses at the end of 1946, according to the Rate Book—3,908.

Number of Unoccupied Houses—43.

Rateable Value—£56,324.

Sum represented by a Penny Rate—£232 6s. 9d.

The Area is mainly an agricultural one, although on the coast-line many of the inhabitants are employed in sea-faring pursuits.

There is an annual influx of visitors during the holiday season over the whole of the district, to which they are attracted by the favourable climate and the beauty of the surroundings.

The conditions of employment and environs are conducive to health and longevity.

## VITAL STATISTICS.

### LIVE BIRTHS :

Legitimate—	Male	92	Female	87	Total	179
Illegitimate—	Male	3	Female	7	Total	10
		—		—		—
		95		94		189
		—		—		—

BIRTH RATE per 1,000 of the estimated resident population—  
17.3.

STILL BIRTHS—Male, 3. Female, 2. Total, 5.

Rate per 1,000 of the total (live and still) births—25.77.

DEATHS—143. Death rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population—13.09.

Deaths from Puerperal and post-abortive sepsis—Nil.

Deaths from other maternal causes—1.

Death Rate of Infants under one year of age :

(a) All infants per 1,000 live births—26.45.

(b) Legitimate Infants per 1,000 legitimate live births—  
22.34.

(c) Illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births—  
100.00.

Deaths from Cancer (all ages)—25.

Deaths from Pneumonia—2.

Deaths from Bronchitis—6.

Deaths from Cerebro Spinal Fever—1.

Deaths from Influenza—2.

Deaths from Diabetes—3.

Deaths from Intra. Cran. Vasc. Lesions—25.

Deaths from Heart Disease—37.

Deaths from other Diseases of Cir. System—3.

## NOTIFIABLE DISEASES (OTHER THAN TUBERCULOSIS DURING THE YEAR 1946.

Diseases.	Total Cases Notified.	Cases Admitted to Hospital.	Total Deaths.
Scarlet Fever	9	5	—
Erysipelas	3	—	—
Whooping Cough	12	—	—
Measles	6	—	—
Pneumonia	1	—	—
Cerebral Spinal Fever	1	—	1
Malaria	1	—	—
Diphtheria	2	2	—
TOTALS	35	7	1



For non-infectious cases and accidents, the St. John Ambulance Association provide an ambulance.

**DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION.**—Close co-operation is maintained with the Devon County Council Health Visitors. The parent of every child in the district receives a birthday card for the child when he or she reaches one year, advising immunisation ; the Health Visitors visit, follow up and advise ; every effort being made to get the child protected. Frequent clinics are arranged throughout the district. 212 children received a complete immunisation. and 273 children a maintenance dose.

### **GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA.**

**THE PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS OF THE AUTHORITY** are a Medical Officer of Health (also Medical Officer of Health of Plympton Rural District, Kingsbridge Urban District, Salcombe Urban District, Kingsbridge and Salcombe Port Sanitary Authority, and Kingsbridge and Salcombe Water Board).

Deputy Medical Officer of Health (occasional).

Two whole-time Sanitary Inspectors.

**LABORATORY FACILITIES** are provided by the County Council for the examination of milk and water in addition to the usual bacteriological examinations. Seale Hayne College also examines milk samples in cases of suspected mastitis. Urgent bacteriological specimens may be sent to the laboratory at the Prince of Wales' Hospital, Plymouth.

**PROVISION OF ANTITOXIN.**—Medical men practising in the district can obtain a free supply of antitoxin. Material is also supplied for the immunisation of children of the district against Diphtheria free of cost.

### **LIST OF PUBLIC VACCINATORS.**

#### **KINGSBRIDGE RURAL DISTRICT.**

<b>NAME OF PARISHES.</b>	<b>NAME OF PUBLIC VACCINATORS.</b>
Charleton, Aveton Gifford, Modbury, Bigbury, Kingston and Ringmore	DR. W. H. COWPER, Kingsbridge.
Blackawton, Stokefleming and Strete	DR. J. H. BRODERICK, 33, Victoria Rd., Dartmouth.
Churchstow, South Milton, Thurlestone, West Alvington, Buckland-tout-Saints, East Allington, Loddiswell and Woodleigh	DR. W. G. VERNIQUET, Barnfield, Kingsbridge.
Chivelstone, Sherford, Slapton, South Pool and Stokenham	DR. W. H. SIMONDS, Chillington.
E. Portlemouth, Malborough and South Huish	DR. R. H. DUMMETT, Homeleigh, Salcombe.

**VACCINATION OFFICER : MR. H. S. SMITH.**

NURSING IN THE HOME.—None provided by this Authority but the County Council employs Health Visitors in the district. There are seven District Nurses, whose services are of the greatest value in the Rural District.

MIDWIVES.—The Midwives Act is administered by the County Council. There are five practising midwives in the district.

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE CENTRE.—There is a centre in Kingsbridge, which is open on Wednesday afternoons.

VENEREAL DISEASES TREATMENT.—At the Venereal Disease Dept., City Hospital, Plymouth. Female in-patients are also sent to St. Mary's Home, Exeter. A refund of rail or bus fare can be made in suitable cases by applying to the Medical Officer of the Centre or to the County Medical Officer.

Treatment is also available from a certain number of selected General Medical Practitioners specially approved for the purpose by the County Council, and Ministry of Health. There is one such practitioner at Modbury, and another at Kingsbridge.

ORTHOPAEDIC TREATMENT is available through the Devon Association for Orthopaedics as In-patients at Exeter and Ivybridge; and for adults at Mount Gold Hospital, Plymouth. For Out-patients there is a clinic at Kingsbridge, and the South-West Clinic, which deals with this district as well, is held at the Mutley Hall Assembly Rooms, Plymouth.

THE SOUTH HAMS COTTAGE HOSPITAL provides beds for 16 patients from Kingsbridge and the surrounding districts:

Men's Ward	.....	.....	6 beds
Women's Ward	.....	.....	6 beds
Children's Cots	.....	.....	2
Private Wards	.....	.....	2 (one bed each)

It is supported by voluntary effort.

ISOLATION HOSPITAL.—By arrangement with the Plymouth City Council, infectious cases requiring hospital treatment may be sent to Swilly Isolation Hospital, Plymouth, and to the Isolation Hospitals at Torquay and Paignton, and ambulances from these hospitals transport the cases.

# TUBERCULOSIS.

## NEW CASES AND MORTALITY DURING 1946.

Age Periods.	New Cases.				Deaths.			
	Respiratory.		Non-Respiratory.		Respiratory.		Non-Respiratory.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
Under 1 year	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1—5 years	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5—15 years	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
15—25 years	3	1	—	—	—	1	—	—
25—35 years	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
35—45 years	2	3	—	—	—	—	—	—
45—55 years	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
55—65 years	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
65 and over	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTALS	8	4	—	—	1	1	—	—

## SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

SCHOOLS.—There are 19 Elementary Schools in the District. Inspections were carried out by the Sanitary Inspector, and in cases requiring further attention by the Medical Officer of Health.

During the year 21 notices were received referring to 47 children who were excluded from school because of communicable disease or because they were contacts.

They were as follows :

Scarlet Fever	.....	.....	11
Whooping Cough	.....	.....	9
Impetigo	.....	.....	1
Chicken-pox	.....	.....	24
Mumps	.....	.....	2

WATER.—Certain portions of the district are supplied from the mains of the Kingsbridge and Salcombe Water Board, namely : Aveton Gifford, Buckland-tout-Saints, East Prawle, Loddiswell, Modbury, Sherford, South Milton, part of Thurlestone, and West Alvington, and extensions of the mains are being carried out to supply Ringmore and further extensions to Thurlestone, West Buckland and Bantham, Chillington, Stokenham and Torcross are about to be commenced.

The Eastern part of the District, especially Slapton, Strete, Stokefleming and Blackawton, are in dire need of water. This problem of supply to the eastern parishes of the District can only be solved by the construction of an Eastern pipe line.

Owing to the war this project was held up, and for the last year or two difficulties of one sort and another have arisen which have delayed the laying of this vitally necessary pipe line.



No houses can be built in the Eastern part of the District, and water has to be carted in the summer.

I consider it essential that difficulties should be overcome and this pipeline laid at the earliest possible moment. The project should be given very high priority on public health grounds.

The villages of Beesands and Hallsands also have a very poor water supply, and it is hoped that it may be found possible to augment these by improving local supplies or by extending Kingsbridge and Salcombe Water Board's mains at an early date.

The mains provide a pure and satisfactory supply to the parishes named. Approximately 631 have a pipe water supply on to the house, and 274 houses draw their water from standpipes.

The remainder of the district rely on local springs and wells, viz. :—Bigbury, Blackawton, Charleton (East and West), Churchstow, East Allington, East Portlemouth, Kingston, Malborough, Ringmore, Slapton, Stokenham, Hope, South Pool, Stokefleming, Strete and Woodleigh.

The parts of the district supplied with water from the Kingsbridge and Salcombe Water Board are provided with an excellent supply both in quality and quantity.

Four bacteriological examinations of the raw, untreated water were made for the Water Board.

Forty-three samples of treated water were taken from the supply mains in the District.

No trace of plumbo-solvency was found in the water during the year.

BIGBURY.—In order to keep the village supply functioning until the Moorland supply is available, it was necessary to renew six hundred feet of corroded piping.

EAST PRAWLE.—The 3in. main was extended for a distance of eighty-five yards to serve properties hitherto drawing their supply from standpipes. This main will also serve the proposed new Council houses.

#### SEWERAGE.

Sewage disposal at Bigbury-on-Sea is most unsatisfactory, and crude sewerage is at present being discharged on to the beach after receiving inadequate treatment in primitive and excessively overloaded tanks.

The conditions on the foreshore at Bigbury-on-Sea constitute a dangerous nuisance, and every effort is being made by the Council to remedy this unsatisfactory state of affairs.

The public sewer at East Prawle has been extended for a distance of four hundred and thirty yards, in order that the school and various other properties could be drained into it.

REFUSE COLLECTION.—A scheme whereby practically the whole of the refuse of the Area is collected fortnightly is now in operation.



WATER CONNECTIONS.—During the year forty-three dwelling houses were connected to the public water supply, namely :

Modbury	.....	3
Churchstow	.....	1
Thurlestone	.....	33
Malborough	.....	2
West Alvington	.....	2
South Milton	.....	1
Slapton	.....	3
Beesands	.....	1

HOUSING.—Permanent : Six houses at Modbury commenced in 1939 were completed in February, 1946.

Ten houses at Loddiswell were commenced on 15th April, 1946. No completions by December due to weather and lack of materials, but it is hoped to complete them by June, 1947.

Six Swedish Timber houses at South Milton were commenced on 23rd September, 1946, and it is anticipated that they will be completed in March, 1947.

Temporary : Thirty temporary houses of the Arcon type were commenced in September, 1946, and all were completed by 25th December, 1947, at Thurlestone (7), West Alvington (4), Loddiswell (4), Malborough (3), Chillington (6), and Aveton Gifford (6).

Site Works at Modbury and Churchstow were commenced in November and December, 1946.

RURAL HOUSING SURVEY.—This important survey, commenced in 1945, continued throughout 1946, and is expected to be completed by Midsummer 1947.

All houses of a rateable value of £16 or less are visited and inspected to ascertain into which category, as enumerated below, each falls into. When the survey is completed most valuable information as to the District's future housing needs will be available.

Up to the end of 1946, 1,689 houses were inspected and classified as follows :

	<i>Houses</i>
Category (1) Satisfactory in all respects	221
Category (2) Minor defects only present	401
Category (3) Requiring repair, structural alteration or improvement	440
Category (4) Appropriate for reconditioning	285
Category (5) Unfit for habitation and beyond repair at a reasonable cost	342
	<hr/> 1,689

The percentages of Categories 4 and 5 of the total are :—

Category (4)	16.87
Category (5)	20.24

Only Clearance Areas procedure can deal with Category 5, and only the assistance of a new Housing (Rural Workers) Act will make any appreciable impression on Category 4.

HOUSING (REQUISITIONED PREMISES).—The Council had over 100 properties on requisition, and their periodic inspection and repair fell to the Public Health Department. Two full-time thatchers were also engaged to repair the thatched roofs of these properties.

RATS AND MICE DESTRUCTION ACT.—In the summer of 1946 the Council adopted the Provisions of the Ministry of Food Circular N.S. 12, and a full-time Rodent Operator or Rat Catcher began work on Block Control. This consists of tackling a parish at a time, and simultaneously poisoning at every point where a harmless pre-bait has been consumed by rats on the four previous days. As a method of dealing effectively with rats it is probably unsurpassed; the very considerable expense is largely borne by the Exchequer.

INSPECTION OF MEAT AND OTHER FOODS.—Whilst the bulk of this district's fresh meat supply is killed and inspected outside the area, an occasional emergency slaughter takes place, and such of this meat as is condemned, together with blown and unsound tinned stuffs from grocers' shops totalled 809lbs. during the year.

NUISANCES.—During the year 148 miscellaneous complaints have been made, and 144 have been satisfactorily dealt with. Works to abate the remaining four being in progress.

DAIRIES AND COWSHEDS.—The principal work under this heading, in addition to routine sampling, has been advisory work for all applicants for Accredited T.T. Licences under the Designated Milks Order. A farmer who wishes to produce a higher grade of milk is visited and the requirements of the County Council are explained to him; the alterations to the buildings, provision of milk room, steriliser, etc. are all supervised, and every possible help and encouragement is afforded.

BAKEHOUSES.—16 bakehouses are on the register, and they are all in a satisfactory condition.

SLAUGHTERHOUSES.—There are in the district 21 slaughter houses. These slaughterhouses are not used at present, except for casualty slaughtering.

I am,

Your obedient Servant,

W. C. SMALES,

*Medical Officer of Health.*





